

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for automatically customizing and specifying a parallel switchgear system using a computer network-based system including a server coupled to a centralized database and at least one client system, said method comprising the steps of:

accessing a product configurator system;

selecting switchgear product configurations from a plurality of user interfaces; and

receiving at least one of a bill of material, a drawing and a price quotation for a parallel switchgear system.

2. A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of registering further comprises the step of utilizing a plurality of graphical user interfaces to enter at least one of billing information, project information, shipping information, engineering firm information, and electrical contractor information.

3. A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of accessing a product configuration system further comprises the step of accessing the database to lookup at least one of a customer information, a project's details, a system, an engine generator, and a distribution breaker.

4. A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of selecting switchgear product configurations further comprises the step of the user using a graphical user interface to select at least one of a system configuration, an engine generator configuration, and a distribution breaker configuration.

5. A method according to Claim 4 wherein said step of selecting switchgear product configurations comprises the steps of:

using the client system to select various switchgear configurations through pull-down menus; and

submitting the selections to the server.

6. A method according to Claim 5 wherein said step of selecting switchgear various configurations comprises the step of using the system pull-down

menu to select a switchgear system configuration, wherein the switchgear system configuration comprises at least one of a system voltage, a number of generators, a size of generators, an enclosure, a laboratory tested listing, a short circuit rating, a main bus size, and a main bus metering.

7. A method according to Claim 5 wherein said step of selecting switchgear various configurations comprises the step of using the system pull-down menu to select an engine generator configuration, wherein the engine generator configuration comprises at least one of a make of generator, governor/load sharing module, a voltage regulation, an alarm shutdown, a grounding system, a PT configuration, a breaker trip unit type, a breaker trip unit model, a breaker size, an annunciation unit type, and a plurality of spare inputs.

8. A method according to Claim 5 wherein said step of selecting switchgear various configurations comprises the step of using the system pull-down menu to select a distribution breaker configuration, wherein the breaker distribution configuration comprises at least one of a trip unit type, a trip unit model, a frame size, an automatic transfer switch, and a load block priority.

9. A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of receiving drawings further comprises the step of generating at least one of an equipment elevation drawing, an equipment outline drawing, and an electrical schematic.

10. A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of receiving a quote further comprises the step of submitting an order to the server.

11. A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of receiving a quotation further comprises the steps of:

displaying quotation data; and
printing the quotation on a printer.

12. A method according to Claim 11 wherein said step of displaying a quotation further comprises the steps of:

displaying a delivery schedule;
displaying methods of confirmation;
displaying a transaction number; and

displaying customer information.

13. A method according to Claim 12 wherein said step of displaying a quotation further includes the step of displaying at least one of an HTML document and a XML document on the client system downloaded by the server system.

14. A method according to Claim 1 wherein the client system and the server system are connected via a network and wherein the network is at least one of a wide area network, a local area network, an intranet, and the Internet.

15. A system for customizing and specifying a parallel switchgear system, said system comprising:

a device;

a computer server connected to said device via a computer network and configured to receive user specifications and selected configurations; and

a product configurator system configured to receive user specifications and user selected configurations, said system further configured to generate at least one of a drawing and a quotation.

16. A system according to Claim 15 wherein the computer network is at least one of a wide area network, a local area network and the Internet.

17. A system according to Claim 15 wherein said device is configured to be a client system for a network of customer devices.

18. A system in accordance with Claim 15 wherein said device configured as a client system comprising a browser.

19. A system in accordance with Claim 18 wherein said server system configured to be coupled to said client system and a database, said server system further configured to:

display on the client system pull-down menus to configure a parallel switchgear system;

accept a user's selection of various pre-determined components of a parallel switchgear system;

store the user's selections; and

generate drawings and a price quotation for a parallel switchgear system.

20. A system according to Claim 15 wherein said server further configured to:

determine whether the features selected are available for the selected product configuration; and

display a warning for user selected non-recommended configurations.

21. A system according to Claim 15 wherein said server system further configured to display at least one of an HTML document and an XML document downloaded by said server system.

22. A system according to Claim 18 wherein said client system is further configured with:

a sending component to send an inquiry to the server system so that the server system can process and download the requested information to the client system.

23. A system according to Claim 22 wherein said server system further configured to:

access the centralized database;

search the database regarding the specific inquiry;

retrieve information from the database; and

transmit the retrieved information to the client system for display by the client system.

24. A system according to Claim 15 wherein said product configurator system comprises a plurality of graphical user interfaces for a user to enter at least one of registration information, billing information, project information, shipping information, engineering firm information, and electrical contractor information.

25. A system according to Claim 15 wherein said product configurator system further comprises a plurality of graphical user interfaces to configure at least one of a system, an engine-generator, and a distribution breaker.

26. A system according to Claim 25 wherein said product configurator system user interface comprises a user interface to select at least one of a system voltage, a number of generators, a size of generators, an enclosure, a laboratory tested listing, a short circuit ratio, a main bus size, and a main bus metering.

27. A system according to Claim 25 wherein said product configurator engine generator user interface comprises a user interface to select at least one of a comprises at least one of a make of generator, governor/load sharing module, a voltage regulator, an alarm shutdown, a grounding system, a potential transformer configuration, a breaker trip unit type, a breaker trip unit model, a breaker size, an annunciation unit type, and a plurality of spare inputs.

28. A system according to Claim 25 wherein said product configurator distribution breaker user interface comprises a user interface to select at least one of a trip unit type, a trip unit model, a frame size, an automatic transfer switch, and a load block priority.

29. A system according to Claim 15 wherein said product configurator system further configured to generate at least one of a bill of material, an equipment elevation drawing, an equipment outline drawing, and an electrical schematic.

30. A database comprising:

data corresponding to parallel switchgear equipment; and

data corresponding to a user desired parallel switchgear system configuration.

31. A database according to Claim 30 further comprising data corresponding to at least one of a plurality of system configurations, a plurality of engine generator configurations, a plurality of distribution breaker configurations, and associated pricing for the various configurations.

32. A computer-readable medium, comprising:

a record of customer submitted parallel switchgear system configurations;

a plurality of rules for matching parallel switchgear equipment to customer submitted selections for a particular configuration of a system; and

a record of results from applying the matching rules to the customer submitted selections.

33. A computer-readable medium according to Claim 32 wherein said record of parallel switchgear configurations comprise records of at least one of a system configuration, an engine generator configuration, and a distribution breaker configuration.

34. A computer readable medium according to Claim 33 wherein said system configuration comprises at least one of a system voltage, a number of generators, a size of generators, an enclosure, a laboratory tested listing, a short circuit ratio, a main bus size, and a main bus metering.

35. A computer readable medium according to Claim 33 wherein said engine generator configuration comprises at least one of a make of generator, governor/load sharing module, a voltage regulation, an alarm shutdown, a grounding system, a potential transformer configuration, a breaker trip unit type, a breaker trip unit model, a breaker size, an annunciation unit type, and a plurality of spare inputs.

36. A computer readable medium according to Claim 33 wherein said distribution breaker configuration comprises at least one of a trip unit type, a trip unit model, a frame size, an automatic transfer switch, and a load block priority.

37. A computer-readable medium according to Claim 32 wherein said record of results comprises at least one record of a bill of material, a drawing, and a quotation for a parallel switchgear system.

38. A computer-readable medium according to Claim 37 wherein said drawings comprise a record of at least one of an equipment elevation drawing, an equipment outline drawing, and an electrical schematic.

39. A computer program embodied on a computer readable medium connected to a server coupled to a centralized database and at least one client system

via a network, said computer program for configuring a parallel switchgear system, comprising:

a code segment that receives user registration information;

a code segment that displays a graphic user interface for the user to select a parallel switchgear system configuration;

a code segment that receives the user selections;

a code segment that stores the selections into a centralized database;

a code segment that cross-references the selections against a unique identifier; and

a code segment that provides at least a drawing and a quotation.

40. A computer program as recited in Claim 39 further includes a code segment that:

tracks information on a real time basis; and

stores information on a real time basis by updating stored information in the centralized database by adding new information to the centralized database on a real-time basis to provide up-to-date information instantaneously to the user upon a request.

41. The computer program as in Claim 39 further includes a code segment that displays a graphical user interface for the user to utilize to select a configuration for the parallel switchgear system.

42. The computer program as recited in Claim 41 further includes a code segment that displays information through an HTML document downloaded by the server system.

43. The computer program as in Claim 41 wherein the selections received from the graphical user interface are stored in at least the server and the centralized database.

44. A computer program as recited in Claim 39 further includes:

a code segment that accesses the centralized database;

a code segment that retrieves information from the database; and

a code segment that causes the retrieved information to be displayed on the client system.

45. A computer program as recited in Claim 39 further includes a code segment that monitors the security of the system by restricting access to unauthorized individuals.

46. The computer program as in Claim 39 wherein the network is a wide area network operable using a protocol including at least one of TCP/IP and IPX.

47. The computer program as recited in Claim 39 wherein the client system and the server system are connected via said network and wherein said network is at least one of a wide area network, a local area network, an internet and the Internet.